

knowledgeable about all of the matters I have talked about—propose such a wrongheaded idea and one they know will never become the law of the land?

Well, unfortunately, this is part of an effort to intimidate and stigmatize people from participating in the political process. We know the majority leader comes out to the floor and talks daily about the Koch brothers, whom he happens to disagree with, and he disagrees with their right and ability to participate in the political process and to affect elections. He doesn't talk about other political actors, such as organized labor, which has essentially been carved out of the limitations on political contributions and political spending. He doesn't talk about people such as Tom Steyer, a former hedge fund manager who says he will spend \$100 million against anyone who supports the Keystone Pipeline or anyone who opposes his views on climate change.

This cherry-picking in terms of trying to intimidate people and to squelch political speech is pretty apparent. It becomes apparent because obviously the majority leader is very worried about the upcoming midterm election and what might happen when we see the pushback from voters in the Senate races all across the country over the last 5 years, and this great, huge growth in government and its intrusiveness in their lives.

Here is the bottom line: Free speech is free speech, period. To quote a recent Supreme Court decision:

There is no right more basic in our democracy than the right to participate in electing our political leaders.

As they said, there is nothing more basic.

As I mentioned a moment ago, thankfully the Founders were wise enough not only to give us the Bill of Rights and our Constitution but to make it very difficult to amend it in the first place, so we know the majority leader's amendment has no chance of actually passing. Yet its mere introduction, the fact that a major political party and a majority in the Senate apparently believes in shrinking the First Amendment in order to weaken their political opponents, should be a cause of broadspread concern in the country. People ought to ask the question: Why in the world would you propose to do something as draconian and as damaging as that?

Well, it is the kind of amendment we would expect to see not in the greatest deliberative body in the world, and certainly not in the Senate, but maybe some banana republic or some country that does not have our experience or our foundation in constitutional self-government. Therefore, it is not merely enough to reject this amendment and then quickly move on to something else. We need to send a clear, unambiguous message that the Bill of Rights is not up for debate. We need to send a clear, unambiguous message that our First Amendment freedoms

represent the bedrock of American democracy, and we will not agree to undermine that, damage it, or otherwise impair it on our watch.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if my friend from Wyoming wishes to speak, we will go through the process for 3 or 4 minutes, and we will put the Senator on what we call automatic pilot if he cares to speak.

Mr. BARRASSO. I will be less than 2 minutes.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, on Thursday at 1:45 p.m., all postclosure time be expired and the Senate proceed to vote on the confirmation of Calendar No. 798; further, that following the vote on that nomination, which is Burwell, the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 519, and the Senate proceed to vote on the confirmation of the nomination; further, that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nominations; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD, and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. With this agreement, there will be two rollcall votes beginning at 1:45.

Mr. President, we are moving this up because we have 10 or so Senators who are going to the 70th anniversary of Normandy.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we proceed to morning business with Senators being allowed to speak up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

STUDENT LOAN

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, in the fall of last year, Adrian College in Adrian, MI, made an announcement that received national attention. Adrian, one of the finest private liberal arts colleges in America, made a promise to prospective students: Beginning this fall, incoming students who graduate from Adrian carrying student loan debt and are unable to find a job that pays above a set income will be eligible for support from the college to pay part or all of that student's loan payments. The program, known as AdrianPlus, will ensure that students who are not able to find good-paying jobs after graduation will still be able to begin

their work careers without facing crushing debt payments all alone.

This announcement was notable for two reasons. The first is that it represents a visionary choice on the part of President Jeffrey Docking and the rest of Adrian's leadership. I am grateful to them for showing the kind of leadership that makes Adrian a proud example of my State's outstanding higher education institutions. Adrian has long been recognized not just for the quality of its instruction, but for its efforts to make that education accessible and affordable, and this is just the latest example of the school's forward thinking.

The second reason this announcement was so notable is that it was so necessary.

As President Docking said in announcing the program, "Student debt load continues to be a national concern." That is surely the case. According to the Project on Student Debt, nearly two-thirds of graduates from Michigan colleges and universities leave school with student debt. They owe an average of more than \$28,000. The rising tide of student loan debt threatens to overwhelm the financial futures of these graduates before they can even get their working lives started. And the looming prospect of heavy loan debt threatens to keep many young people from even reaching a college campus.

Adrian College's program will not completely erase this problem, but it is a good start. Likewise, no single piece of legislation will make college more affordable, increase access to education for middle-class families, or eliminate the mountain of debt many students carry. But it is time for us to start taking some steps in the right direction. A number of Senators have introduced or are working on student loan legislation, including legislation allowing students to refinance their debt at lower interest rates. I believe the Senate should take up, debate and pass legislation to lighten the all-too-formidable load. We should explore other ways to ensure that college education is indeed affordable to all.

Study after study shows that a college education makes an enormous difference in allowing Americans to pursue rewarding careers. But if we can not ensure that all Americans have access to higher education, we shut off access to the American dream. We cannot let the disturbing trends in student debt and college costs continue unabated, and I hope that, inspired by the Adrian College example, we will act to halt and reverse those trends.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, due to unavoidable family commitments, I was unable to cast votes relative to rollcall vote Nos. 164 through 170 on Monday, June 2, and Tuesday, June 3, 2014. Had I been present, I would have voted yea in each instance.